

AMENDMENTS TO THE ABSTRACT

Please amend the Abstract as follows:

In an internal combustion engine, which is provided with a variable valve mechanism that varies an open/close characteristic of an intake valve, a target open/close characteristic of the intake valve is ~~determined and at the same time~~ determined. ~~Simultaneously,~~ a control speed ~~of when~~ at a time when the intake valve is controlled to have the target open/close characteristic is ~~determined, so that~~ determined. As a result, the variable valve mechanism is controlled according to the target open/close characteristic and the control speed.